



Comprehensive Update to the General Sign Provisions Current Sign Code – Issues of Concern

Sign Code Review Committee

April 14, 2014

Doug Darnell, AICP, Senior Planner

Current Code Comments

- **City Comments are related to *Eight Basic Categories* that include:**

- *Variance Related Issue*
- *No Standard*
- *Standard Too Vague*
- *Content Based Regulation*
- *Process and Administration*
- *Not Business Friendly*
- *Latest Technology*
- *Definition/Nomenclature*



Committee Comment Column

Committee Comment Column – As an example the Committee Comment could be something like:

- A. Agree.
- B. Do not agree.
- C. Do not agree because and instead suggest....



Comments

- **Window Signs** (*Not Business Friendly*)
 - 1 sign per entrance, max. 9 s.f. Recommend a percentage similar to Design Guidelines & other jurisdictions (x percentage)

Insert From Page 8

<p>A. <u>Window Signs.</u> For each use or occupancy, 1 window sign for each public entrance, not exceeding 9 square feet per sign, shall be permitted.</p>	<p><i>Not Business Friendly</i> - One size fits all approach lacks flexibility. The City's Sign Design Guidelines include percentage where a smaller area may be more appropriate for a smaller center and larger area more appropriate for larger with larger window areas. Percentage used in other jurisdictions.</p>
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Comments

- **Freeway Signs** (*No Standards and Process*)
 - Subject to granting of Minor CUP by Planning Commission. Better to establish appropriate standards & eliminate the need for CPC approval of a MCUP.

Insert from Page 8

Office, Commercial and Industrial Freestanding Signs.

- A. Any freestanding sign that is oriented so as to be visible from an adjacent freeway is subject to the granting of a Minor Conditional Use Permit by the Planning Commission. Upon review, the Planning Commission (or the City Council on appeal) shall not consider the graphic design of the copy or display face.

No Standards

Process & Administration - Need to establish clear and specific standards for freeway signs. By doing so the permit process could be more streamlined and eliminate the need to require a Minor Conditional Use Permit.



Comments

- **Monument Signs (*Variances & Content Based Regulation*)**
 - Most variances in the last 5 years are related to number, height & size of sign as well as number of articles of information.
 - Articles of Information – Eliminate restriction due to content based regulation

Insert from Page 8

A.	For uses in Office and Commercial Zones not in an Office and Commercial Complex. Generally for business identification, 1 on-premises monument sign, maximum 25 square feet in area and 6 feet in overall height, displaying one article of information.	<i>Variance Related Issue</i> - Code may be too restrictive. Four of 13 variances in last 5 years related to number of monuments. <i>Content Based Regulation</i> – Should eliminate restrictions on articles of information.
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Comments

- **Sign Placement** (*Standard too Vague*)
 - This is not a specific measurable standard and should go in the Design Guidelines instead of Code.

Insert from Page 9

2. Sign Placement. Where signs are placed on both major and secondary street frontages, each such sign shall be placed as near to the middle of the street frontage as practical or at a major driveway entrance to the commercial complex from the street frontage.	<i>Standard Too Vague</i> – <i>This is not a specific & measurable standard. Instead, it reads like a design guideline rather than development standard and belongs in Design Guidelines.</i>
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Comments

- **Pole Signs vs. Pylons**

(Definition/Nomenclature)

- Pole Sign - cabinet on top of pole vs.
- Pylon Sign – support structure/structures sheathed & architecturally enhanced for integrated design.

Insert from Page 9

1. One on-premises monument or **pole sign** for each commercial complex as follows:

Definition/Nomenclature (Pole Sign vs. Pylon)

Distinction needs to be made between a Pole and Pylon sign in the Sign definitions. Reference to a Pole sign implies a cabinet on top of simple pole (e.g. steel pole) as opposed to a pylon with support structure or structures sheathed & architecturally enhanced for a completely integrated sign design.



Examples



Pole Sign

Vs.



Pylon Sign

Comments

- **Encroachment into Public Right-of-Way**
(Process & Administration)

Based on prior Committee member comment explore feasibility of a low cost streamlined alternative to current process for a sign extending into right-of-way.

Insert from Page 14

A. Encroachments into the Public Right-of-Way. Any sign that would encroach into the public right-of-way shall first obtain an encroachment permit from the Public Works Department. (Ord. 6966 §1, 2007)

Process & Administration – A Sign Committee member previously commented on cost. Is there a low cost, streamlined option that Public Works might consider?



Comments

- **Readerboard Signs (Latest Technology)**
 - To keep current with the latest technology additional and appropriate standards are needed.

Insert from Page 17

On Page 19 the Amusement Park Std. needs to be revised to eliminate the outdated incandescent bulb requirement.

19.620.200	Readerboard Signs.	Latest Technology – Due to technological advances in reader boards (i.e. digital electronic message centers (EMC's)) there is a growing industry for these types of signs and greater desire from business to have these types of signs. To keep current with the latest technology additional and appropriate standards related to light intensity, automatic light adjustment for day and nighttime, frequency of image display, are needed in addition to the more common standards related to size, height, etc.
A.	Theaters. Theaters offering live performances or motion pictures and having permanent seating for at least 100 persons may, in lieu of on-premises building sign, display 1 readerboard sign using either manually or electronically changeable copy, maximum 1½ square feet of signage for each front foot of building frontage; not to exceed 100 square feet of signage per building frontage.	
	and High Schools. Elementary, middle and high schools shall be permitted 1 freestanding or building mounted combination readerboard on-premises sign per use as described below:	Business Friendly – Currently electronic reader boards are only allowed for Theatres, Schools, Assemblies of People – Non-Entertainment, Public Entertainment Venue and Amusement Parks. Should consider allowing for other commercial uses where appropriate and establish appropriate standards relative to the latest technology.
	1. Sites Less Than Fifteen Acres. One maximum 40 square foot, 6 foot high static or readerboard on-premises, monument sign or 40 square foot static or readerboard building sign. Manually changeable or electronic readerboard copy is permitted.	
	2. Sites Fifteen Acres or More. One maximum 65 square foot, 15 foot high static or readerboard on-premises pole sign or 65 square foot static or readerboard building sign. Manually changeable or electronic readerboard copy is permitted.	
C.	Other Assemblies of People - Non-Entertainment. Other assemblies of people - non-entertainment shall be permitted one freestanding or building mounted combination readerboard on-premises sign per use as described below:	
	1. Sites One Acre In Size Or Less. One maximum fifteen-square-foot, six-foot-high static or readerboard on-premises, monument sign or twenty-four-square-foot static readerboard building sign. Only manually changeable readerboard copy shall be permitted. The copy shall not be changed more than once a day and shall not be illuminated between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.	
	2. Sites Greater Than One Acre In Size. One maximum twenty-five-square-foot, six-foot-high static or readerboard on-premises or twenty-four-square-foot static or readerboard building sign. Only manually changeable readerboard copy shall be permitted. The copy shall not be changed more than once a day and shall not be illuminated between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.	
	3. Excepting Assemblies of People - Non-Entertainment Located Within an Existing Industrial, Office or Commercial Complex. Assemblies of people - non-entertainment located within an existing office, commercial or industrial complex shall be allowed a readerboard sign serving that particular use in lieu of the permitted monument sign for the existing multi-tenant office, commercial or industrial complex permitted under 19.620.070 per 19.620.200 D 1 & 2 below. (Ordinance No. 6919)	

Comments

- **Temporary Signs (Process & Administration)**
 - Currently no permit required. Need inexpensive and quick permit process for temporary signs such as Grand Opening Banners.

19.620.230 Temporary Signs.

A. All paper signs, banners, balloons, streamers, placards, pennants or portable signs that direct, promote, attract, service or that are otherwise designed to attract attention are prohibited, except that the following temporary signs may be displayed in all non-residential zones subject to the stated rules. Any calculations of sign measurements may be subject to review of the Planning Division, and the Planning Division may add conditions to address matters of public safety and welfare.

1. **Grand Opening Banners.** One banner not exceeding 60 square feet shall be allowed for a period not exceeding 30 consecutive days for newly opened or reopened establishments at the site where the banner is to be displayed. The banner shall be stretched and secured flat against the building surface and shall not extend higher than the building eave or the building parapet wall.

Process and Administration (Temporary Signs) – The Code currently does not require a permit for these signs. Without a permit requirement and ability to review temporary signs for compliance with standards, the result is proliferation of such signs displayed, in many cases, in violation of the standards and on a more permanent basis creating unattractive visual clutter in commercial areas. The Code should establish a permit process for temporary signs and include a method such as issuance of a sticker with a permit to affix directly to the temporary sign so that Code Enforcement can effectively determine those that are permitted and those that are not.

Not Business Friendly – Current process of not requiring permits for temporary signs results in lack of effective enforcement of current temporary sign requirements.

An unintended consequence of requiring permits for temporary signs may be that a dramatic change to strictly enforce the current Code quickly becomes business unfriendly.

Additional flexibility for business friendly alternatives for temporary signs where appropriate should be considered. The Code might consider instances where inflatables, feather signs, etc. may be allowed with limitations and perhaps allow for longer display periods.

Insert from Pages 21 & 22



Comments

- **Prohibited Signs – Portable Signs** (Not Business Friendly)

Business Community has expressed a desire for portable signs. Currently only allowed in the Downtown pedestrian mall. Suggest allowing in other pedestrian oriented areas with appropriate standards.

A. Portable Signs. Unless expressly allowed by another provision of this Chapter, portable signs are prohibited in all zones.

Insert from Page 24



Not Business Friendly (Portable Signs/A-Frames)
- The business community has expressed a desire for this alternative form of sign currently only allowed in the Downtown pedestrian mall under the Downtown Specific Plan. It may be appropriate to allow in other pedestrian oriented retail areas such as Brockton Arcade, Riverside Plaza, etc. This would involve having a clear definition of the characteristics necessary to allow such signs, as well as establishing size and height requirements. These should have a limit on number of A-frames such as one per business and standards on where they may be located.

Comments

- **Prohibited Signs – Advertising Statuary & Commercial Mascots (Not Business Friendly)**

To be more business friendly it may be beneficial to allow these other forms of signs which are currently prohibited.

Insert from Page 25

A. Advertising Statuary. All forms of advertising statuary are prohibited in all zones.

***Not Business Friendly** - Do we want to continue to prohibit or allow for these more creative and whimsical types of signs within certain parameters.*

A. Commercial Mascots. All commercial signs held, posted or attended by commercial mascots as defined in 19.910.040 are prohibited in all zones. (Ord. 6966 §1, 2007)

***Not Business Friendly** – Regulating mascots may be considered business unfriendly. Some cities have regulated these based on the premise that commercial mascots pose traffic safety hazard. Beyond this, there appears to be no compelling need to regulate these and may be something to consider allowing.*



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Comments

- **Permits – (Process & Administration & Content Based Regulation)**

Permits are currently required for face changes. Suggest that permits not be required for face changes avoiding content based regulation and proc to verify if a use is a permitted use.

19.620.250
A.

Permits.

Permits Generally Required. Unless a particular type of sign is specifically exempted from the permit requirement, by a provision of this Chapter or other applicable law, no person shall erect, change or replace any sign allowed by the provisions of this Chapter without first having obtained the necessary permits. A permit is required whenever there is a change to the lighting, supports, structure or mounting device of a sign. When design review and/or a Certificate of Appropriateness are applicable to a proposed sign, those approvals must be obtained before a sign permit application may be processed.

Process & Administration

Content Based Regulation (Face Changes) - This provision means that if a building or electrical permit is required for the sign then a permit from Planning is required. Contrary to this provision, current practice is to require a sign permit for face changes that would not require building or electrical permits. The primary basis for this, has been to use the process to determine if a proposed sign is for a use that is permitted at a given location. If the use is not permitted, a permit will not be issued. The appropriate method needs to be through Planning sign-off on a business license. If this practice is to continue, the Code should clearly state such. Preferably, permits should not be required for a face change so as to avoid the realm of content based regulation, and rather establish a process for Planning to determine if a use is permitted through review and sign-off of a business license.

Process (Temporary Signs) - With regard to temporary signs such as grand opening banners no permit is required based on this provision. Nowhere else in the Code does it clearly state temporary signs such as grand opening banners area exempt from a permit. Without a permit requirement for temporary signs and review for compliance of temporary sign standards, the result is a proliferation of such signs displayed on a more or less permanent basis creating visual blight. The Code needs to clearly establish a permit process for temporary signs and include a method such as issuance of a sticker with a permit number to affix directly to the temporary sign so that Code Enforcement can effectively determine those that

Insert from Page 25





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